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ABSTRACT

The primary objective of this research is to explore whether black student activism can be presumed to indicate a relative lack of socialization among activists. Contrary to the popular belief which argues that widespread challenges to established authority and dominant groups should be seen as an index of social disorganization among the disadvantaged, the theory presented argues that sustained periods of collective activity such as demonstrations are indicators of intense socialization and organization building. The research was conducted in a large all-black public Chicago high school. The strategy was to select an array of school organizations and attempt to interview each available member. Two race-focused organizations, the Afro-American History Club (AAH) and a group termed the Militant organization, were the primary focus of the study. Through interviews, the author sought to specify how the social environment and activities of students in the two groups differ from that of other students. It was found that significant similarities exist between students in the AAH and Militant samples in their exposure to race-conscious interactions and writings; in this respect, they both differ markedly from nonrace students. In conclusion, it may be presumed that black student activism indicates positive political socialization among members of race-conscious groups. (Author/JR)

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ABOUT THE AUTHOR

James P. Pitts is currently investigating the dispersion into the social structure of recent black alumni of Northwestern University, where he is an assistant professor of sociology and a research associate at the Center for Urban Affairs. He is an associate editor of two sociology journals and is the editor of a special issue of the *Journal of Black Studies*, Volume 5, Number 3 (March) 1975. A shorter and more theoretically focused approach to some of the data presented in the present paper is available in the June 1975 issue of *Social Science Quarterly*. His recent article in *American Journal of Sociology*, "The Study of Race Consciousness: Comments on New Directions," Volume 80, Number 3 (November) 1974 presents a detailed critique of how race consciousness has been conceptualized in recent social science work and argues for a thorough revision in methodological assumptions.

PREFACE

The issue of how to interpret activism among the oppressed has been addressed from two very different perspectives, social disorganization versus political organization. The first argues that widespread challenges to established authority and dominant groups should be seen as an index of social disorganization among the disadvantaged. The fact that they challenge "the rules of the game" is a sufficient indicator of their inadequate socialization, lack of discipline, their irrationality. When I began research on activism among black high school students in late 1968, I was sensitive to the popularity of this explanation among both laymen and social scientists. Large-scale collective action by blacks against white controlled institutions and property created a tense political situation in which many Americans preferred to believe that black militance derived from a breakdown in black socialization.

I was anxious to support the alternate interpretation. This argues that sustained periods of collective activity (demonstrations, cultural groups, etc.) are indicators of intense socialization, and organization-building. Largely because of my recent participation in a university situated black student movement, I had no difficulty imagining that apparently similar activity among blacks throughout the metropolitan area of Chicago and the rest of the nation represented purposeful activity.

The primary objective of this research then is to address the issue of whether black student activism can be presumed to indicate a relative lack of socialization among the activists. A case study is unlikely to put this issue to rest, but data presented in this paper suggest the type of data that can be used to support the alternative (political organization) perspective.

"Since many of the lower-class families originated in the South, they have the outlook of the Negro folk whose ideas and beliefs have been modified by contacts with the secular life of the city. Although the parents continue in many cases to view the world more or less from the standpoint of their folk background, the outlook of their children is influenced by the school, the newspaper, the cinema, and other devices of civilization. Because of the fact, however, that lower-class youth are more or less isolated by their poverty and lower level of culture, they are influenced less by movements and ideas than are the other classes in the community" (Frazier, 1940: 168-169).

"From the data which we have been able to gather on these youth, it seems clear that social movements in the strict meaning of the term exercise practically no influence on the personality of Negro youth" (Frazier, 1940: 193).

Had Frazier been alive in the late 1960s, he would have had a vastly changed environment in which to study the behavior of black youth. Beginning in 1960 with the southern lunch counter sit-ins and continuing through boycotts and building take-overs in the late 1960s, black youth in high school and college took leading roles in race-related activism. The activism of black youth has been apparent in several areas besides schools: urban civil disorders, the military, and even within moderate civil rights organizations characterized by a middle-aged and middle class leadership. Nonetheless, racial activism by black youth has been most prominent in schools. The data which are subject of the present discussion were gathered in 1968-69 from urban black high school students in the midst of an obvious race-related social movement. The general purpose of the research is to study political action and socialization in regard to race consciousness. The specific purpose of this discussion is to empirically demonstrate the utility and need for an organizational approach to the study of race consciousness. Although normative views are very much a part of my research, neither that research as a whole, nor the data presented here constitute opinion or attitude research per se. Rather, particular attention is focused on patterns of social participation which appear to be conducive to encouraging and maintaining race conscious behavior. Race consciousness is studied by way of observing and interpreting what people do.

Race consciousness is normative (should or ought) behavior intended to affect relations between racial groups to the advantage of one or the other. Black race conscious behavior aims to alleviate or even reverse blacks' unequal status vis-a-vis whites. It expresses concern and ambition for the racial category. Race conscious persons, and institutions want to "further the Race." This type of motivated action is not of recent origin, nor is it limited to a few

channels of expression. It is evident in famous black spokesmen such as Frederick Douglas, W.E.B. DuBois, and Martin Luther King, Jr. It is also evident in the behavior of less visible persons who have boycotted, and marched. Furthermore, it is evident among both integrationists and those who have advocated community control of institutions and black studies programs.

Some observers of students in this research would find it useful to distinguish between those who are "black nationalists" and those who are not. Certainly some of the students so labeled would insist on the distinction. However, my empirical analysis has had the effect of making clear to me the unreality of insisting upon such absolute distinctions. Nevertheless, there are real modal differences. Thus, for purposes of analysis and research, black nationalism is viewed as a variant of the general phenomenon, race consciousness. Where black nationalism most clearly differs from other forms of race consciousness is in the primary emphasis placed on the desirability of blacks building, maintaining, and controlling *institutions* meant to serve their perceived needs vis-a-vis whites. The sterotype of the black nationalist is of a black who desires an autonomous, black-run nation-state, but the vision of autonomous race conscious institutions often influences a more limited set of objectives. Some recent examples are: attempts to gain community control of the schools and police in black neighborhoods, attempts to promote more formal communication among black scholars, and attempts at urban-rural economic integration within the Nation of Islam.

A more important distinction concerning race conscious behavior is how the race inequality relationship is perceived. Sociologically speaking, skin color is not the basis of race. Rather, race is a particular social relationship between categories of people. In a relatively deterministic fashion, that relationship continually produces the same winner and the same loser, the respective sides frequently, though not always, being designated by physical attributes. When race conscious blacks see whites as the *categorical opposition or enemy* of black efforts to overcome this relationship, this is "militant" race consciousness. Blacks and whites are perceived as competitors in a zero-sum game, or as the Black Muslims are fond of saying, "the white man's heaven is the black man's hell!" On the other hand, race conscious behavior is often manifest in a nonmilitant form. Whether the race consciousness is "integrationist" or "black nationalist" in character, in its nonmilitant form it manifests the premise that it is possible (and desirable) to uplift blacks without adversely affecting the circumstances of whites. It believes in the possibility of a simultaneous development of both racial categories.

The Research Design

The research was conducted from late September 1968 through May 1969 in a large all-black public Chicago high school which I shall refer to as West Side High. Through September and October, the school was affected by a city-wide student boycott of predominantly black schools by many students. Formal interviewing of students began in February, 1969. The theoretical interest in how various students relate to the current social movement of race consciousness led me to collect a sample of persons who are organizationally involved in a specifiable and comparable way. Accordingly, only members of voluntary organizations within West Side High were interviewed. The strategy was to select an array of school organizations and attempt to interview each available member of those organizations. Two race-focused organizations were operating in West Side High during the year of the research: the Afro-American History Club (AAH) and one which I have termed, the Militant organization. The first was initiated by the school and had a faculty sponsor; the other was student initiated, lasted for a little longer than the research year, and refused to have a faculty sponsor. Eight other student organizations, generally the largest ones, were also selected for interviewing. The total sample consists of these three subsamples, the AAH and Militant groups and a collection of members of different organizations, the Nonrace sample. Members of the latter have in common that they are categorized as not belonging to the first two, which are not only presumed to be more group-like, but also probably more efficient socializers with regard to race.

A majority of each sample was in fact interviewed. These sessions lasted from one to two hours and took place within the school. However, even with the overwhelming cooperation of teachers and students, it was not possible to approximate the objective of sampling everyone on the organizational lists. The basic reason is that West Side High, seemingly like many other black urban schools, does not operate like the bureaucratic model suggests. True enough, there are central records and each student is assigned a schedule of classes to attend at regular times. However, the facts are that at any time in the school day, numerous pupils roam the halls and hang around the washrooms, gymnasium and lunch room. Better than 15% of the official enrollment drops out each school year. Without exaggeration, it can be said that the informal organization of the school is more efficient for locating students than is the official class schedule. The significance of extracurricular organizations is demonstrated by the fact that sponsors or organizations were often instrumental in locating students and legitimating our research efforts. Only two students refused

to be interviewed. One respondent was in the AAH sample and the other was in the Nonrace sample. The proportions of the possible sample and subsamples who completed interviews are:

Nonrace	(117)	.603
Afro-American History Club	(17)	.809
Militant	(25)	.666 approx.
	(159)	.665 approx.

Most of the students interviewed were juniors and seniors. Given some fluctuation in the numbers of the Militant group from time to time, there were approximately 239 possible respondents in the combined sample, including approximately 35 in the Militant group. Four of the Militant members were also members of the second race-focused organization, *but they are not counted in the latter in this analysis.* Membership in either race-focused organization, but particularly that run solely by students, is treated as a determining classificatory characteristic.

A comment should be made concerning the basic method of analysis and the style of data presentation to be used. Comparisons are between the three samples and the data are quantified. Based on reputations circulating within West Side High, both race-focused organizations were expected to be more race conscious than the Nonrace sample, and the Militant sample most of all. Practically speaking, this means that each time a table is used to examine a relationship between variables, the analysis requires that a table be constructed for each of the three samples. However, there is no reason to present each of the numerous tables used in the analysis. A conscious attempt has been made to summarize much of the data in prose. Thus, in this discussion, tables are reserved for some of the more significant comparisons.

Sample Profiles

Nonrace — The respondents in this sample are nearly equally divided between males and females with a slight majority (55.6%) of the former. Slightly over forty percent (43.6%) of these students reported that they held jobs during the academic year of the interview. Most of them (68.5%) were born in the North, and nearly all of these in Chicago. The only

other places of birth with sizeable representation are areas of less than 100,000 population in the South (27.4%).

A majority (64.1%) reported that they live with both parents. While the remainder of this sample reported deceased parents, and parents who are either separated or divorced, this proportion is about what we might expect, based on census figures for this income group and community. Approximately forty-three percent of the Nonrace sample have a parent who works at a semi-skilled job, but white-collar employment is only about five percent. Approximately equal proportions (11-15%) of Nonrace families have parents who are either unskilled or unemployed. As one might expect among a less than middle class population, a separate category has to be distinguished for the eleven percent (13 persons) who were *unable to describe* the type of employment which their parents have. Data on the educational status of parents indicates a great deal of heteorgeneity. Forty-three percent have at least four years of high school education, but approximately twenty-percent have only an eighth grade education or less. It seems likely that the latter characteristic is associated with the southern birth of parents, but we lack the data to judge the degree to which age of parent also might be a factor. The younger the parent, the more likely it is that he or she will have experienced more than an elementary education.

AAH — Here again, the sexes are represented in nearly equal (9 males and 8 females) proportions. Seven of the seventeen (41.2%) reported that they hold jobs during the school year. While a majority (69%) said that they were born in northern metropolitan areas, southern birth is reported more than in any other sample. Seven (41.2%) of the AAH respondents reported that they were born in southern areas of less than 100,000 population. This may indicate that the AAH sample differs in exposure to race inequality from the other two samples. Though the small numbers involved (17) make comparison with the Nonrace sample less than perfect, respondents in the AAH sample reported living with both parents in nearly identical proportion (11 of 17). In regard to the types of jobs held by parents, AAH parents are again similar to Nonrace parents. Nearly half of them (47.1%) are reported as semi-skilled, two persons (11.8%) are unskilled, and another two are unemployed. One respondent was unable to describe jobs held by either parent. The educational background reported of AAH parents is similar to that of parents of Nonrace respondents. A little less than half (41.1%) reported at least 4 years of high school for their parents. However, only two persons (11.8%) reported eight or fewer years of schooling for parents. In this limited sense, parents of AAH respondents represent a slightly higher level of schooling than parents of Nonrace

respondents. College graduates are rare among parents of Nonrace respondents; they are nonexistent for parents of AAH youngsters.

Militant — The sex ratio in this sample is nearly even, but with females have a majority (14 or 25). A strong majority (68.0%) of the respondents reported that they work during the school year. In addition, only 5 of the 25 were born in places other than Chicago. It is not clear why these students are so much more involved in the labor market, but this is an indicator that they are at home in the urban millieu.

A majority of the students of the Militant sample, 15 or 25 (60.0%), report that they live with both parents. This distribution is only minimally different from that of the other two samples. Indeed, two of the respondents in the Militant sample are sibblings, so their one-parent family status is actually counted twice. However, the skill/status rank of parents of Militant students is difficult to judge with accuracy. Like parents described in the other two samples, the largest category (36.0%) among Militant parents is semi-skilled. The only significant difference is in the proportion of students who were unable (or unwilling) to describe their parents' jobs. Six Militant students (24.0%) were unable to provide this information. On the other hand, with regard to parental education, respondents' reports indicate that the parents of students in the Militant sample are characterized by the most education. The differences are not tremendous. Most of the Militant students (56.0%) reported that their parents graduated from high school, and this includes 20% who reported college matriculation and special occupational training courses. None of the Militant parents were reported to have finished college. Three persons (12.0%) reported that their parents had eight or fewer years of education.

Interaction Networks

As mentioned earlier, the distinguishing emphasis of this study of socialization is the primary emphasis given to patterns of social interaction. The elemental assumption is that variations in political consciousness with regard to race inequality reflect variations in exposure to social influences supportive of such world views. More particularly, my intent is to specify how the social environment and activities of students who are in the AAH and Militant samples differ from that of students who are not in those organizations. For the purpose of the following discussion, the social environment of respondents will be treated as consisting of two parts, the school, and the community.

The School Environment

School is an arena of performance and evaluation. As the evaluators of student performance, teachers and administrators are in authority over the students. Some of the more typical ways that student performance is rewarded are grades, awards, and memberships in prestigious organizations within the school. Grades generally provide a scale of maximum and minimum values which indicate the instructor's evaluation of the student's performance in the academic curriculum. Attendance records generally permit a minimum estimate of a student's participation in the school as a whole. That is to say, a student who never misses a day of school participates in the school more than a student who is frequently absent. However, in West Side High these indices are inadequate as indices of relative student participation in the school.

Grades are a less than adequate indication of how most students achieve peer esteem and faculty backing in West Side High. The typical freshman entering the school reads at a level which places him among the lowest 10% in the nation. There is so little pressure for academic achievement that the school administration uses a "C" honor role to encourage higher grades. Similarly, daily attendance figures have little approximation to the facts in a school where "cutting" is widely practiced and reports of absence generally underestimate non-attendance of classes. Nevertheless, West Side High is a functioning organization, object of the ambitions, loyalties and resentments of its students and staff. Examination of alternative ways of participating in the school will shed some light on the respondents in this study.

Student rewards within West Side High are strongly influenced by how students and faculty relate to the large system of extracurricular activities. Noteworthy individual accomplishments and a commitment to group achievement in various organizations are ways that students can win the esteem of their peers and achieve distinct public identities. (Notwithstanding the low academic ranking of the school, West Side High students consistently achieve city and state-wide recognition for excellence in activities for which middle class reading skills are not a prerequisite.) Students in the Nonrace, AAH and Militant samples have this organizational context in common. For example, most of the students in the two race-focused organizations also participate in extracurricular organizations which do *not* focus on race. However, despite the fact that all respondents have West Side High as a common environment, there are some noticeable differences in *how* they participate. As a case in point, conversations with instructors and administrators left no doubt in my mind that students in the Afro-American History Club were generally considered to be model students.

When their extracurricular participation is compared to other students, the reason for their public recognition is apparent.

Most of the 159 respondents interviewed belong to either one or two extracurricular organizations in the school. The pattern of activity within the Militant sample is nearly identical to that of students in the much larger Nonrace sample. (Keep in mind that since organizational membership was a criterion for inclusion in the research that the students interviewed undoubtedly over-represent students who are organizationally active.) However, the pattern is quite different for the AAH sample. The data indicate that 10 of 17 (58.8%) students in this sample are active in *three or four* school organizations. In the Nonrace and Militant samples, a little more than a third of the students are active in only one organization. In the AAH sample, only one student participated in so few school activities.

Esteem is not the only advantage which can be derived from participating in the school's extracurricular activities. Many students would not make it through West Side High without the active intervention of teachers who, for one reason or another, commit themselves to pushing and pulling the particular student toward the objective of graduation. Here, the influence of organization sponsors is tremendous. The director of the band or the football coach generally sees his students several times a day, and better than most other teachers, knows where to locate these charges when necessary. Most importantly, they directly influence students' class attendance by both gentle and coercive counseling. Students are frequently out of classes for the "legitimate" excuse that they have organizational responsibilities. Students are also out of classes or late to them for less legitimate reasons, but frequently sponsors are willing to give them written excuses which will keep them from penalties.

This means that students who do not develop sponsor relationships which can function as protective umbrellas must either break few important rules, or fend for themselves in avoiding penalties. The level of state funding for the public schools is based on the principle that students are attending school full-time; aid is only given in proportion to attendance figures which demonstrate that seats are filled. Students who are absent from any class as many as twenty times in one semester are *required*, by state law, to be failed in that class. Both the school system and the absent student lose when a failure because of absence (FA) is given. Since absence from class is almost normal at West Side High, a student's failure of a class for the specific reason of excessive absences tells us two things: 1) the student probably did not care enough about that class to avoid the sanction for not attending; and 2) at the time of the failure, the student probably lacked a relationship with a teacher which

would have helped him avoid such penalties. Failures because of absence is a unique *index of the respondents' negatively sanctioned participation in West Side High.*

Official records concerning failures because of absence show that it is a common event in all samples, but far less characteristic of students in the AHH sample. Thirteen of the seventeen students (76.5%) in this sample have never acquired an (FA), and the remainder have had only one or two in their high school career. The true pattern of (FA's) in the Nonrace and Militant samples could not be accurately ascertained because the official records of 24 students in the former and 10 in the latter were unavailable. Nonetheless, the available data suggest that (FA's) may be more prevalent among members of the Militant sample than among students in the Nonrace sample. While 73 of 93 students in the larger sample have never acquired an (FA), this is the case for only 9 of the 15 Militant students for whom data were available. At this rate, it is likely that the 10 missing cases in the Militant sample represent a significant addition to the total number of (FA's) among the Militant sample. Excluding the missing data in each sample, the average number of failures for the Nonrace, AAH, and Militant samples respectively are .47, .35, and 1.33. Even a cautious interpretation of the data supports the judgment popular among many in West Side High that the Militant group has more than its share of failures because of absence.

The social system of West Side High generates its own "good guys" (AAH sample) and "bad guys" (Militant sample). Indices of both constructive and negative forms of participating in the school are consistent for the AAH sample. We have no difficulty envisioning them as responsible student leaders — "good citizens." On the other hand, indices of negative and constructive participation are not consistent for the Militant sample. On the one hand, most of them are reasonably well-integrated into the organizational life of the school, but on the other, they have a noticeable number of students who flagrantly ignore the attendance requirements.

It should be noted that the "good guys" versus "bad guys" antithesis had a basis in something more than scholarly conjecture. During the research year, there was evidence of tension between the two organizations as the Militant organization challenged the established student leaders for prestige, influence with administrators and a following among the student body. While participation in West Side High generates both "good guys" and "bad guys," the similarities between Nonrace and Militant students suggest that the notorious image imputed to the Militant organization is not primarily based on their non-attendance of class. Students in the Nonrace and Militant samples are both much more integrated into the

life of the school than are students who have no organizational memberships and the several hundred who drop-out each year. Rather, attention to the non-attendance of class by several Militants is largely an outgrowth of their critics' attempts to explain their visible political activity.

Interaction Networks Outside School

Data have indicated both similarities and differences in the way that the three samples participate in school. Now the question is, what are the ways that respondents relate to organizational activity in the community? More particularly, do the Militant and AAH samples differ from each other, and each from the Nonrace sample, in exposure to race conscious, social influences? This general question has been broken down into several more specific areas of interest:

1) what evidence is there that previous exposure to social activism is associated with 'membership' in one sample rather than another?
2) what evidence is there that 'membership' in one sample rather than another is associated with membership in distinct *types* of organization in the community?
3) what evidence is there that the Nonrace, AAH and Militant samples have distinctly different patterns of attending community and city-wide organizations of which they are *not* members?
4) what evidence is there that the respective samples have different exposure to race-focused reading materials?

The discussion which follows is based on information provided by respondents concerning what they or their parents do. In many instances, respondents were asked to explain the meaning associated with activity they report. Interest is not in opinions they express, but in patterned activism.

Of the four questions listed above, the first is distinctly ex post facto. The first specific question of interest is whether the samples differ with regard to activism by students' parents. While it might be expected that respondents' memories are less than perfect records of their parents' activities, it should be made clear that the operational assumption is that interactions between parent and child provide opportunities for socialization and role models for the latter. Since the primary theoretical focus is on establishing association between reported parental behavior and membership in one or another sample, the relative efficacy of socialization and role models within the family will be assumed.

The interest in parental activism derives from an awareness of numerous small organizations on the West Side which often contest the policies and control of institutions which serve them inadequately. Respondents were queried with particular reference to activism in relation to schools, poverty or welfare institutions, and politics. The results are easily summarized. *Parental activism is characteristic of a minority of respondents in each sample.* In each sample a few parents were reported to have engaged in activism to change something. However, for all three samples, the highest level of reported parental activism was in regard to participating in Chicago's Democratic political machine. Most of the respondents who reported that their parents are active in politics (18 of 117 persons in the Nonrace, 4 of 17 in the AAH, and 9 of 25 in the Militant samples) say that their parents have received pay to get voters to the poll at election time. Two interesting points stand out about the very few parents who were reported as activists. First, they are proportionately more evident in the race-focused samples and most of all among Militant students. Second, parents who are reported to have worked for the Democratic political machine are more likely to be represented among reported activists in favor of changing or improving school policies than are other parents. It would be inappropriate to argue hat one type of activism "causes" the other, however the skimpy data we have shows the association quite distinctly.

Students were also asked to report their parents' participation in conventional activities such as the PTA, church, block clubs, and the like. This pattern emerged. Parents of students in the AAH sample are more represented in *all* forms of volunteer activity than parents of "average" students (Nonrace sample); parents of students in the Militant sample are less represented in conventional activities. For example, in terms of current membership of parents in a PTA, this is reported for 29.9% of the Nonrace sample, but for only 16% (4 persons) of the Militant sample. Students in the AAH sample gave this report 47.1% (8 persons) of the time.

Personal involvement in previous protest or activism was also characteristic of only a few of the students. Only 4 students in the AAH sample and 6 in the Militant sample (both approximately 24%) reported that they had participated in racial protest within the previous year (not counting activity related to the recent school boycott). Less than 10% of the Nonrace sample reported the same. Even when such activity was reported, *there was no decisive pattern in what respondents were likely to report as racial protest.* Five or six students, at least three of them in the Nonrace sample, reported looting during the civil disturbances after the death of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Several reported they had helped

picket food stores under the auspices of SCLC's Operation Breadbasket. Only one respondent reported anything related to his job.

Community Organization Participation and Attendance

It was my working assumption that the development of race-focused student organizations is related to the growth of race conscious activity in the community. To the degree that race conscious behavior among students is not an isolated phenomenon, one should expect to be able to trace the connections between students in race-focused school organizations and race conscious organizations outside of school. One of the questions used to assess this was: "Are you a member of any organizations in your community?" Names of organizations and descriptions of what they do were recorded and coded. The researcher supplemented these descriptions with subsequent field investigation. All of those who named what the researcher considered black cultural organizations, community-action, and civil rights organizations, were labeled "quasi-activist." Block clubs, all recreational and civic organizations were labeled "other." Thus these distinctions represent the *types* of community organizations of which students could report membership.

It should be emphasized that these distinctions (including "no membership") do not measure *number* of memberships, nor do they give equal weight to each type. Consistent with the way that I establish who is counted in a particular sample, if a respondent reports membership in organizations outside of school which I classify as quasi-activist, that membership *defines* the respondent's organizational behavior, even if he has other memberships in more conventional organizations. Virtually all of the quasi-activist organizations mentioned by respondents stressed some form of race consciousness; many of them were openly promoting black nationalist-related issues.

Table I illustrates two important phenomena, one positively associated with the presumed relative race consciousness of the samples, and the other distinguishing the two race-concerned samples from the Nonrace. The latter phenomenon involves the proportion

TABLE I

MEMBERSHIP IN TYPE OF COMMUNITY ORGANIZATION BY MEMBERSHIP IN TYPE OF SCHOOL ORGANIZATION

Type of Community Organization	Membership in Type of School Organization			
	NONRACE	AAH	MILITANT	TOTAL
Quasi-Activist	4.3% (5)	17.6% (3)	32.0% (8)	10.1% (16)
Other	26.5 (31)	47.1 (8)	24.0 (6)	28.3 (45)
No Membership	69.2 (81)	35.3 (6)	44.0 (11)	61.6 (98)
Total pct.	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
No. of cases	(117)	(17)	(25)	(159)

of students in each sample who report that they are *not* members of any organizations in their community. In the total sample, almost 62.8% reported that they were not members of organized activities outside of school (excluding church). Among the samples, this is most characteristic of the Nonrace sample, and least characteristic of the AAH sample. For those who are not in a race-focused organization, 69.2% claim a lack of membership in non-school organizations. Only 35.3% (6 of 17) report this status in the AAH sample. Forty-four percent (11 of 25) of respondents in the Militant sample claimed a lack of extra-school organizational activity.

The expected directional pattern across samples concerns the proportion in each sample who report membership in what I have termed "quasi-activist" organizations. Thirty-two percent (8 of 25) of the Militant respondents reported this kind of membership, generally in black nationalist-oriented groups. Next highest is the AAH sample with 17.6% (3 of 17), and finally, a mere 4.3% in the Nonrace sample. Note that the proportion of the Militant respondents who are classified as "other" is very similar to the proportion of the Nonrace sample who are so classified. The difference between their distributions can be accounted for by their differences in the non-membership and quasi-activist categories. Compared to "average" students (Nonrace sample), respondents in the AAH and Militant samples are far more organizationally involved with their communities. Consistent with their organizational behavior in school, respondents in the AAH sample are proportionately more active than respondents in the other samples. While somewhat less active than the students in the AAH sample, Militant respondents stand out in the *type* of community organization participation. On the other hand, even in the Militant sample, less than a majority claim to be members of quasi-activist organizations outside of school.

Student membership in quasi-activist community organizations provides such a unique input into the educational situation that it is important to examine the nature of student interaction with community organizations a bit further. Other variables were introduced into the analysis to see if they could account for the apparent relationship between membership in type of school organization (Nonrace, AAH, and Militant) and membership in type of community organization. Neither the sex of respondents, nor their previous participation (or non-participation) in activism could do much to "explain" the organizational membership differences between the three samples. Parental educational status, a measure of socio-economic position, was introduced. Both *Black Metropolis* and *An American Dilemma* have shown that among blacks, there are different types of organization affiliations which are associated with

status based on education. But when these works were done, the activities of adolescents were of far less political consequence. Based on numerous studies which focus on education and participation in organizations, we should expect that within each sample, students of higher parental status will be members of organizations more often than those of lower parental educational status. Further, since it is presumed that "type of community organization" is an ordinal measure of exposure to race conscious (black nationalist) activity, it is hypothesized that respondents with higher status will be members of quasi-activist organizations more often than those of lower status.

In the Nonrace sample (table no shown), there was virtually no relationship (Gamma = —.07825). In the AAH sample (table not shown) there is a stronger association between parental educational status and membership in type of community organization. As parental status increases, the proportion who report "no membership" decreases. There is a moderate tendency for most AAH students to be active in organizations outside of school, the proportion increasing with higher levels of reported parental education (Gamma = —.29730). The higher levels of reported parental education are also "overrepresented" among those who claimed membership in quasi-activist organizations.

Among respondents in the Militant sample, the expected relationship is much stronger (Table II), than in the AAH and Nonrace samples. Of the 32% who reported membership in quasi-activist organizations, 75% (six of eight) reported having a parent with at least a high school education. Each of the two in the post-high school educational categories, some college and special training, are represented in the quasi-activist category. The measure of association for this table is Gamma = —.49701.

Thus, when I introduce education of parents as a variable, it can be seen that it has very different effects within each sample. In most studies of educational status and membership in volunteer organizations, education is positively correlated with *number* of organization memberships. The data in this study thus far indicate that the socio-economic status of the black students in our sample (159) is positively associated with the *type* of community linked interactions conducive to learning race conscious perspectives, *but only to the extent that he or she has access to interactions with other students who are in race-focused organizations in the school.* Among students in the Nonrace sample, higher status students involved in conventional school activities are no more likely than those of lesser status and similar activities to be engated in outside interactions conducive to learning race conscious perspectives. However, higher status students in the same high school and activities, but who

TABLE II

MEMBERSHIP IN TYPE OF COMMUNITY ORGANIZATION BY PARENTS' COMPOSITE EDUCATIONAL STATUS FOR MILITANT SAMPLE

type of Community Organization	Composite Educational Status of Parents: 8th or Less	Some High	4 yrs. of High	Some College & Special Training	Not Ascertained	TOTAL
Quasi-Activist	33.3%	20.0%	11.1%	100.0%	0.0%	32.0% (8)
Other	33.3	20.0	33.3	0.0	33.3	24.0 (6)
No Membership	33.3	60.0	55.6	0.0	66.7	44.0 (11)
Total pct.	99.9	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
No. of cases	(3)	(5)	(9)	(5)	(3)	(25)

GAMMA — —.49701

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are in race conscious school groups as well, are very likely to engage in outside interactions conducive to the formation of race conscious perspectives. Type of community organizational membership is a function of the *interaction* between socio-economic status and membership in certain types of school organizations.

The relationship between church attendance and sample membership is worthy of separate attention from the above. Most research on the political attitudes and behavior of blacks has indicated that religious affiliation, particularly the fundamentalist tone of the lower class black church, sets as a damper on resistance to racial subordination. The Nation of Islam (Black Muslims) is often cited as a black nationalist institution which preaches a different theology, but manages to have similar consequences. (None of my respondents indicated that he or she was affiliated with a non-Christian religion.) Some writers see the lower class church as fostering a fatalist attitude concerning control of matters this side of heaven. Other writers stress the idea that black Christians worship a while God and thus are unable to mobilize the psychic strength to sever their allegiance to symbols and people that are white. In either case, we would expect that regular church attendance would be negatively associated, across samples, with the degree of race consciousness imputed to the respective samples. Thus, a smaller proportion of students in the AAH and Militant samples would attend church regularly than students in the Nonrace sample. Assuming students in the Militant sample are the most race conscious, they should rank lowest in church attendance. Respondents who answered "yes" to the question: "Do you attend church at least once a month?" were coded as regular attenders of church. Table III supports the hypothesis, though there is not much difference between the 76.1% of the Nonrace sample and the 70.6% (12 of 17) of students in the AAH sample. A *majority of each sample*, including 15 of 25 students in the Militant sample, do attend regularly though. Information is not available, however, which could indicate whether or not church attendance has decreased *since* respondents joined the race-focused organizations. It could just as well be the case that black youth who attend church regularly are less inclined to join a militant race conscious (black nationalist) organization. Without attempting to resolve the causality of the relationship then, most students in the Militant sample are regular church attenders; but the sample is less exposed to this type of normative control than the AAH and Nonrace samples.

Attendance at Community and City-Wide Organizations

Membership in non-school organizations provides an instructive picture of the differential exposure to race conscious values which characterizes the three samples. Yet in a

TABLE III

REGULAR CHURCH ATTENDANCE BY MEMBERSHIP IN TYPE OF SCHOOL ORGANIZATION

Regular Church Attendance	Membership in Type of School			
	NONRACE	AAH	MILITANT	TOTAL
Yes	76.1% (89)	70.6% (12)	60.0% (15)	73.0% 116)
No	23.9 (28)	29.4 (5)	40.0 (10)	27.0 (43)
Total pct.	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
No. of cases	(117)	(17)	(25)	(159)

period of ideological transformation, the concept of membership captures but a part of the significant interactions which accompany freshly kindled interests and political conversions. For this reason I attempted to get an indicator of respondents' organizational activity which has *not* chrystallyzed into membership, i.e., their exposure to organizations of which they are *not* members. Again, it was expected that Militant students would report the highest proportion who have attended quasi-activist organizations, with students in the AAH sample reporting the next highest proportion. The question to which students replied was: "Have you attended any meetings of community or city-wide organizations in the last two months? e.g., Operation Breadbasket, Urban League, tenant unions, block clubs, etc." As in the previous question dealing with membership, the names of organizations were recorded and then coded.

Table IV tells an important story about the behavior of our respondents within the previous two months. As expected, students in our Militant sample have a high proportion of attendance at quasi-activist organizations, locally, and in other parts of Chicago's Black Belt. However, there is scarcely any difference between the proportion of the Nonrace sample (15.4%) and that of the AAH sample (3 of 17 or 17.6%). Far more of the Nonrace sample reported membership in such organizations. The large gathering to which several referred was connected with the attempt to promote a city-wide school boycott by black students. There is indication that the relatively "high" attendance proportion for these "average" students represents an eagerness to have more contact with race conscious activities and (as one student expressed it) "learn more about black people." Supportive evidence for this conclusion is the very low (5.1%) percentage of Nonrace respondents who reported attending "other" organizations during the same period. In fact, only among students in the AAH sample do we have more than ten percent (17.6%) who reported attending conventional organizations outside of school. Attendance at conventional community and civic organizations is rare. At the time of this research, those who reported recent attendance of community organizations of which they were not members, generally referred to meetings of quasi-activist groups. Furthermore, unlike the earlier discussion of membership in community organizations, socio-economic status as measured by level of parents education (tables not shown) fails to explain much in the different attendance patterns represented by the Nonrace, AAH and Militant samples.

The same set of responses also permit a crude measure of the intensity of recent attendance, i.e., the names of organizations reported permit the reader to see how *often* students attended community organizations in the recent past. Table V shows that students in the

TABLE IV

ATTENDANCE* AT COMMUNITY AND CITY-WIDE ORGANIZATIONS BY MEMBERSHIP IN TYPE OF SCHOOL ORGANIZATION

Type of Organization Attended	Membership in Type of School Organization			
	NONRACE	AAH	MILTANT	TOTAL
Quasi-Activist	15.4% (18)	17.6% (3)	48.0% (12)	20.8% (33)
Other	5.1 (6)	17.6 (3)	4.0 (1)	6.1 (10)
None	79.5 (93)	64.7 (11)	48.0 (12)	73.0 (116)
Total pct.	100.0	99.9	100.0	99.9
No. of cases	(117)	(17)	(25)	(159)

*Refers only to organizations of which respondent claims not to be a member.

TABLE V

NUMBER OF COMMUNITY AND CITY-WIDE ORGANIZATIONS ATTEND BY MEMBERSHIP IN TYPE OF SCHOOL ORGANIZATION

Number of Organizations Attended	Membership in Type of School Organization							
	NONRACE		AAH		MILITANT		TOTAL	
None	79.5%	(93)	64.7%	(11)	48.0%	(12)	73.0%	(116)
One	17.9	(21)	23.5	(4)	24.0	(6)	19.5	(31)
Two	.9	(1)	11.8	)2)	16.0	(4)	4.4	(7)
Three	1.7	(2)	0.0	——	12.0	.(3)	3.1	(5)
Total pct.	100.0		100.0		100.0		100.0	
No. of cases	(117)		(17)		(25)		(159)	

Militant sample are far more likely to report attending more than one organizational meeting in the previous two months. Twenty-eight percent (7 of 25) reported attending two or more organizations of which they were not members. Relative to students in the AAH sample whose curriculum includes the history of black Americans, the Militant respondents are more aggressive in their organization attendance. In the lack of curricular support (black history) for their race consciousness, they are similar to students in the Nonrace sample. However, in the Nonrace pattern only a few (.9% plus 1.7%) respondents attended more than one organization. The degree of intensity of organization attendance is directly proportional to the degree of race consciousness expected of the samples.

Selective Media Exposure

Just as a sociologist or historian involves himself in a select pattern of indirect human communications such as journal articles and books related to his field, so it might be expected that our respective samples would display patterned differences with regard to reading race-related materials. To test this assumption, very early in my interview schedule I presented respondents with two questions about their reading habits. First, respondents were presented with the following list of magazines and papers which are available to the Chicago area. Also presented is the statement read to respondents, as well as the coding distinctions devised for analysis. Neither code numbers, nor any form of coding distinctions were presented to the respondents.

This is a list of some of the newspapers, magazines and newsletters in Chicago. There are many that are not listed here. Do you read any of these listed?

Coding Distinctions

Code	Non-Black Owned and Operated Publications
11	mainstream, non-opponent defining
12	quasi-radical
Code	**Black Owned or Operated Publications**
21	mainstream, non-opponent defining (non-militant)
22	quasi-radical or community action oriented (militant)

Written Media

(11)	Chicago Daily News
(22)	Muhammad Speaks
(11)	Chicago's American

(22) Black Truth (West Side Torch)
(12) Guardian
(11) Time Magazine
(11) Newsweek
(12) Ramparts
(11) Chicago Tribune
(11) Chicago Sun-Times
(21) Garfieldian
(12) The Movement
(21) Jet Magazine
(11) Life
(11) Look
(21) Ebony
(21) Chicago Defender

This item preceded any questions asking for either attitudes or type of organizational participation. Thus, a distinct pattern indicating racial motivation in reading patterns would be unrelated to sensitizing cues contained in the interview instrument. Furthermore, the measure is made more selective by the fact that only a small part of the responses are useful for indicating exposure to information of possible political significance. Those respondents who truthfully or not, claimed to read what is here termed as "mainstream" publications, black or white, provide little insight for the analysis. Those who reported reading what I have termed "quasi-radical" publications, however, indicate a selective exposure to reading matter. Since very few respondents claimed to read "quasi-radical non-black (white) oriented publications," I will only discuss the response pattern for "black quasi-radical oriented publications." Table VI presents the data for selective media exposure as measured by the number of such written media that each respondent mentioned. When a student mentioned more than two, the additional ones were volunteered by the student when the interviewer solicited the names of any magazines and newspapers read by the student, but not listed on the interview.

Over fifty percent of the respondents (57.2%) claimed to read at least one of the newspapers, magazines or newsletters which the researcher has classified as "black-oriented quasi-radical." However, there are strikingly different patterns of reported exposure to such media among the three samples. The most important thing to note is the proportion of each sample who reported that they do *not* regularly read any of these. This proportion ranges from 56.4% for the Nonrace sample, 11.8% (2 of 12) for the AAH sample, to an empty cell for respondents in the Militant sample. In other words, membership in type of school organization predicts the degree to which organization members reportedly read at least one

TABLE VI

SELECTIVE EXPOSURE TO BLACK QUASI-RADICAL MEDIA BY NUMBERS OF MEDIA AND MEMBERSHIP IN TYPE OF SCHOOL ORGANIZATION

Number of Media	Membership in Type of School Organization			
	NONRACE	AAH	MILITANT	TOTAL
None	56.4% (66)	11.8% (2)	0.0% —	42.8% (68)
One	29.1 (34)	41.2 (7)	20.0 (5)	28.9 (46)
Two	14.5 (17)	47.1 (18)	56.0 (14)	24.5 (39)
Three	0.0 —	0.0 —	20.0 (5)	3.1 (5)
Four	0.0 —	0.0 —	4.0 (1)	.6 (1)
Total pct.	100.0	100.1	100.0	99.9
No. of cases	(117)	(17)	(25)	(159)

publication which has "radical" ideas and is oriented to a black audience. A closer look reveals that 47.1% of the AAH sample claimed to read both such publications which were listed on the interview schedule, while 80.0% of the Militant sample did so. Only a small proportion in the Nonrace sample read as many as two. Only students in the Militant sample named more than two. Of those who were able to do so, almost all mentioned certain community newspapers and newsletters put out by black nationalist and poverty-oriented community organizations. A few also reported that they read the newsletters of black student unions at local colleges.

Immediately following the question concerning newspapers, respondents were asked: "Have you read any books in the last couple of years?" Only those students who said that they had were then asked: "Have any of the books that you have read in the last couple of years had any effects on your thinking?" Again, only if a respondent answered in the affirmative did the questioning on this issue proceed. Having eliminated those for whom books have been an unimportant source of experience, I then asked students how their thinking was affected and the title of each book. In coding the responses, all titles mentioned were listed, as well as the number of times they were mentioned. Titles by and/or about blacks were distinguished from other books. No attempt was made to classify books by whether or not they were primarily radical.

Seldom did students mention a book which did not focus on black people (tables not shown). In both race-focused samples, more than 90% of the titles mentioned are by and/or about black people. In the Nonrace sample thirty-eight (38) books were named which did not concern blacks. Few of them were mentioned more than once. In the combined race-focused samples, only thirteen (13) such books were named. The more than sixty (60) books dealing with blacks ranged from sensational novels about interracial sexual exploitation in the antebellum South to *Message to the Black Man* by the Honorable Elijah Muhammad of the Black Muslims. Many "black" books were named several times. *The Autobiography of Malcolm X* was by far the most frequently mentioned title (27 times).

The distribution of those who have *not* read a meaningful book is equally striking. The pattern of non-reading across the Nonrace, AAH and Militant samples has some similarities to that for exposure to black quasi-radical publications. The Nonrace sample is characterized by a majority (65.8%) who report that they have not had such a reading experience. However, the AAH sample with 23.5% (4 persons) and the Militant sample with 20.0% (5 persons) are quite similar in this respect. Clearly the major difference is between the race-focused samples and the Nonrace sample. Fewer than fifteen percent of the latter sample

have read more than one meaningful book, while this is the norm among AAH (53.0%) and the Militant (78.0%) students.

These statistics should be viewed in light of the curriculum at West Side High and the reading proficiency of the typical student. The reading level of students at West Side High, as measured at the ninth and eleventh grades, is well below the 20th percentile. Furthermore, at the time of interviewing, only three classes were taught in Afro-American history. With very few exceptions (4 persons in the Militant sample), the only respondents who were enrolled in these courses were in the Afro-American History Club. Many of the books mentioned by this sample were used or recommended in the Afro-American history classes. Thus, the reported reading statistics for both the Nonrace and Militant samples largely represent the extent to which these students have "sought" and found meaningful, literature which focuses on the experiences of black people. Indeed, in this measure, as in the one concerning black quasi-radical newspapers, reading activity among those frequently defined as "poor" students (Militant) is more intense than among the "good" students (AAH) who are enrolled in black history curriculum.

Summary

During the academic year following the research (September 1969-June 1970) the Militant organization ceased to function. A number of its members had graduated and a few had dropped out. Among those who were juniors and seniors in the previous year, several became active in the Afro-American History Club. Two became officers in the Club. As a direct result of this infusion, the Afro-American History Club became more active in student government, in fact, the organization became the recognized spokesman for race-conscious ideals among West Side High students. They became the official representatives of the school to other student bodies.

The foundation for these subsequent developments is suggested in some of the foregoing analysis. Despite the different reputations they earned in West Side High, there were significant similarities between students in the AAH and Militant samples in their exposure to race conscious interactions and writings. In this respect, they both differ markedly from Nonrace students. When one considers (as I have avoided in this quantitative analysis) the actual overlap of memberships (4 persons) between them at the time of interviewing, the similarities in exposure and participation are even stronger. Additional data gathered concerning reported boycott participation and expressed support for race conscious actions

show that similarities in race consciousness between students in the AAH and Militant organizations were even more pronounced than the data used in this analysis suggests. While membership in one of the three samples continued to be the best predictor of race conscious views and activity, differences between the Nonrace and race-focused students were, without exception, far greater than differences between students in the respective race-focused organizations. Membership in either the AAH Club or the Militant organizations, despite all differences in individual background, was associated with strikingly similar results.

Discussion

In closing, I wish to suggest how this analysis fits into the spectrum of studies focusing on the political socialization of youth. At present, most studies of youth political socialization focus on the individual as the unit of changing behavior and as the unit of analysis. Studies influences by the psychoanalytic perspective tend to emphasize the physiologically influenced process of individual maturation as it filters social experiences. For example, several contributors to a recent Daedalus volume on early adolescence argue that cognitive sophistication and successful coping with latency are prerequisites to the ability and inclination to formulate and/or use ideology. In most of these writings, adolescence is regarded as a stage in personality development, a predictable sequence in behavior changes which unfold through each individual's life history.

Likewise, political science-influenced research on the political socialization of youth also tends to focus on the individual as the locus of change. However, it gives virtually no attention to maturational processes. Nonetheless, similar to the psychoanalytic approach, the behavior of interest is frequently operationally defined social psychologically, e.g., operationally defined as individual attitudes toward the President of the United States, civil liberties, the Democratic and Republican parties. Where such research attempts causal inferences, attention is given to social factors. Adolescents are regarded as a captive audience, available for imprint by various institutions such as the family (parents), schools, church and government. In this respect, the psychoanalytic and political science approaches are similar: both tend to view political socialization as a process of behavior modification in which individual youths are the objects rather than the subjects of action.

There are several ways in which the data analysis presented here contrasts with the types of political socialization studies outlined above. Substantively, attention focuses on

black race conscious behavior, that particular race-related behavior oriented to the salvation of blacks from racial inequality. Secondly, social patterns, interactions and memberships, rather than individual psychology are at the heart of the analysis. The data permit us to describe significant differences in social participation within a similarly situated population of black adolescents. Indeed, the organizational participations of these various students demonstrate that a politicized response to race is neither characteristic of all black youth, nor a mere outgrowth of personality development like so-called authoritarianism or prejudice. While data from West Side High cannot be used to describe all instances of collective black student militance, it strongly suggests the shortcomings of explanations which associate race consciousness with a "type" of student (intelligent versus unintelligent, good citizen versus poor citizen, etc.), while ignoring the social relationships in which students partake. An empirically substantiated understanding of race consciousness among black people must take into account the various daily situations and activities which make up their lives.

Schools have become increasingly important as organizations which mediate interpretations of inequality. Thirty or forty years earlier fewer blacks were exposed to twelve or more years of formal schooling. Now, even with relatively high drop-out rates, virtually all blacks between the ages of six and sixteen participate in schools. At the elementary and secondary level most of them are relegated to predominantly or all-black institutions. In daily peer interaction, the racial militance of small cadres can have a socializing effect which extends far beyond their numbers, often overriding the socialization efforts of school authorities and parents.

The future direction of the race conscious movement among blacks is difficult to estimate, particularly when one is extrapolating from interviews with high school students. For one thing, race in the United States is a much broader and more complex phenomenon than homogeneous or segregated schools. Yet, it seems especially ironic that a public education system which is frequently disparaged for not stimulating learning can provide a relatively favorable setting for the propagation of race consciousness among black youth.

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